



PRESS RELEASE

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Kitty Hawk begins Otaru visit

By Journalist 2nd Class (SW) Christopher Koons, Kitty Hawk public affairs

OTARU, Japan -- USS Kitty Hawk (CV 63), the U.S. Navy's oldest active warship, along with embarked Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 5 and USS Cowpens (CG 63), pulled into Otaru, Japan, July 1 for an eventful port visit that will include a celebration of the United States 230th Independence Day anniversary, July 4.

"The purpose of the port visit is to provide an opportunity for rest and relaxation and to give the crew a chance to participate in friendship and goodwill activities such as community service projects," said Capt. Ed McNamee, Kitty Hawk's commanding officer.

Kitty Hawk has been underway since June 8, conducting exercises in its Western Pacific Ocean area of operations. The main event so far was exercise Valiant Shield 2006, the largest joint U.S. military exercise in recent history, which involved the Kitty Hawk Carrier Strike Group joining up with USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76) and USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72) Carrier Strike Groups as well as Air Force, Marine Corps and Coast Guard assets for maneuvers off the coast of Guam. Valiant Shield concluded June 23.

All told, more than 5,300 Sailors from the Kitty Hawk Strike Group will visit Otaru, all of them eager to take advantage of the local attractions.

"The crew always enjoys opportunities to visit cities such as Otaru and nearby Sapporo, and experience different parts of this fascinating country," said McNamee. "The hospitality shown us here is indicative of the relationship that exists between our two countries and the Sailors of our two naval forces."

The Kitty Hawk Strike Group is the largest carrier strike group in the Navy and is composed of the aircraft carrier USS Kitty Hawk (CV 63), Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 5, the guided-missile cruisers USS Chancellorsville (CG 62) and USS Cowpens (CG 63), and Destroyer Squadron 15.

To find more news about the Kitty Hawk Strike Group, visit the Navy NewsStand at www.news.navy.mil/local/cv63/.

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